

A

# REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENGLISH NATION.

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Tuesday, August 27. 1706.

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**I**N my last, I made a short Attempt to remove, if possible, from the Minds of Men, an Error fatal to all manner of Charity and good Meaning in the World : I mean, our judging and censuring the greatest and best Actions of Men by the Success only, and not at all by the real Prospect, true Reason, or plain Design of the Actors.

I am unhappily bound to more Explications of my self than other Men, the Cavaliers and Remarkers of what I say, being so many, and therefore shall explain my self upon some particulars.

I am not backward to acknowledge, that I have in all my generals, a Retrospect upon Particulars ; I think 'tis very hard, that all our Generals, Officers, Ministers of State, and publick People, should be char-

geable with the Success of every Action they undertake or direct ; to prove it reasonable to do so, they ought first to be made Gods, have a superintendent Power over Nature, govern Consequences, and be vested with the Direction of, or Superiority to Providence. How absurd it is to make Men answerable for Events of things, who are but Men, and partake of *that particular Quality of human Nature* to be confin'd in Knowledge of Futurities ? — But above all 'tis unjust — Men in Posts and Trusts in Kingdoms and Armies, are indeed accountable in Points of Fidelity, Vigilance, Prudence and Capacity. But farther no Men can be answerable, if they are not capable of the Employ, the Reputation even of the Prince it self suffers by employing them ; Men of incapable Heads, un-

unqualified, unperforming Genius, and unapt for the great Business of the State they are call'd to, should not be employ'd. But the Prince is not answerable, no not in Discretion, if the Minister be a Traytor, for that he could not foresee; The Incapacity of the Officer reflects on his Employer, but his Want of Integrity reflects only upon himself.

But after all, the Capacity of a Statesman or the Wisdom and Courage of a General, tho' wisely consider'd by the Prince, this does not secure Success; if a General were bound to conquer, or be condemn'd to die, who woud command our Armies; Men are to answer for no more, than as Men ought to be expected from them.

To descend to particulars: It was very hard the Duke of Marlborough should fight for his Life, in fighting with the French in a double Capacity in the Feild from the Fire of the Enemy, and at home from People that pretend to charge every Disaster, that may befall him as a Crime upon himself; and at least wound his Reputation in it, if they cannot his Life.

I forbear to repeat here the Clamours rais'd, and the Mischief contriv'd against that great General, on the occasion of the Expedition to Germany; how many had contriv'd his Ruin, and openly threatened his Life for carrying away the Army of England to remote Regions and Countries, where he had no Authority to lead them—I desire now any one but to consider, what had been the Language of these People, had the Battle of Blenheim chang'd Hands, had our English Horse chang'd sides with the Gen's d' Arms of France, and made their Exit in the Streams of the Danube? Had my Lord Cutts, instead of the French Infantry, been enclos'd in the Village, and laid down their Arms at the Feet of the conquering Enemy? Hark a little to the Language, which I believe will be granted me, had then been the Cry of the Town.

Alas poor England! we are bound to be always betray'd, bought and sold, what Business had he there? What had we to do in Germany to fight for other Folks, that never trouble themselves with the War, but to puzzle all the rest of the Confederates, and

then when his Empire is in Distress, we must be sent to help? Ureasonable Hazzard! a preposterous March! to sacrifice a handful of brave Men against the united Forces of France and Bavaria! and then the ridiculous Conduct, to attack the united Armies superior in Numbers, advantageously posted, inaccessible in Front, flank'd with the River on the right, and the Woods on the left, was ever any thing so rash! why, this was meer throwing away Mens Lives, playing a desperate Game, meer murthering their Soldiers, nothing but Madmen would have done so—Another comes in, and he cries Treason, Treason! We are all bought and sold, here's the English Army trapan'd into Germany eight hundred miles off, we are all betray'd and undone; this Duke of Marlborough, to show his Power, gratifie his Pride, and engratiate himself with the Emperor, has gone and run upon Projects, and left the Nation expos'd without an Army! Impeach him! his Head shall pay for it; if ever he comes home. Well, as to the Fight, suppose him beaten—Ay, this was his Thirst of Glory. Intolerable Pride, that sent away the Prince of Batten with 15000 Men under the Pretence of a Siege of Ingolstar, that he might have the Honour of a Victory, and then attack the Enemy under all the Improbabilities and Disadvantages in the World. 'Tis all Treachery, let him be impeached; 'tis pitty but such Doings as these should be punish'd.

I appeal to all that know any thing or the Times; what has prevented all this and worse, both in Discourse and Practice in England—The Answer is short, nothing but VICTORY.

The Duke fought there for his Life, his Reputation, his Interest, and his Safety, as well as for his Allies. In that Victory, he conquer'd Murmur, Cavil and Reproach, and nothing but Victory secur'd him from being treated here, with the utmost Insult, and the severest Prosecution of enrag'd Envy.

Turkish Justice! why may it not be; that the unfortunate may be as wise, as faithful, as vigilant, and as brave as the prosperous and successful? The Circumstances are

are all plain; in the March to Bavaria, the Judgment of the Duke of Marlborough was as conspicuous, as his Conduct at Blenheim, or his putting Valour at Schellenberg, tho' he had left the Day, and had merited the same Applause, and had exchang'd the City of Lyons with Monsieur Tallard for the Town of Nottingham.

Discerning Eyes could easily see, there was no other Game to play; nothing but that Attempt, nor that Attempt but at that very Moment, could do the Work— We had but that one Day for the whole Contest, the whole Empire had fallen at a Blow, and the Confederacy been at once torn to pieces, had not that March been taken; the Affair in Italy had been at an End, and all Lombardy must have submitted to French Power; the victorious Bavarian had seiz'd the Imperial Eagle, and Vendome had joyn'd the Mareschal Tallard on the Banks of the Danube.

From hence, Gentlemen, let us learn to see, where the true Merit of Actions lye, and let Men of Virtue and Fidelity act for us upon safer Principles; for really unless we do so, such Men will not be long found to serve us.

I'll now instance another Article on the very same Person the Duke of Marlborough. We had last Week a general Famine of Foreign News, the Posts were wanting, and we heard nothing from abroad; when on a sudden, a Sort of People, who generally have their News most ready when there's no Post, and whose Cause stands in need of Forgeries and Fancies to support it, industriously spread a Story, that the French had fallen upon the Confederates, had defeated our Army; that the Duke was kill'd or a Prisoner, and the Seige of Meenin rais'd.

I'll wave for the present the Inconsistence and Improbabilities of the Story, as well as the Question how they came by it, no Post having been possible—— But I crave leave to animadvert a little on the Improvement of it, and the Vogue of the People on the Subject.

Indeed I doubt it's true, says one, that calls himself a Whig too. I was afraid, we should be too venturesome and too confident

" of Success! Alas, Meenin is a prodigious Place, and we could not employ less than 30000 Men in the Lines, and the French were 80000 Men, how could we but expect to be attack'd? Twas a strange Madness to sit down before such a Town as that, before the Enemy was beaten, he should have pus'd the French Army first, before they had joyn'd their Troops; but our Generals are so proud of Victory, so puff'd up with Success, they think the French will never look them in the Face again, and so we shall be ruin'd; 'tis hard, we must be so at the absolute Dispose of one Man, I think, if it be true, he ought to be call'd to an Account for it.

Well, Gentlemen, and now the Post is come over, and not a Word of this true, and how foolishly do these People look now! yet the things answers some Ends too, and the Party raises these Shams to amuse us, and please themselves; but you may see by these dark Intervals of our Peoples Tempers, how the Duke of Marlborough, and with him any one else that serves their Country, shall be treated if they miscarry, let their Integrity and Conduct be never so great.

I could enter into the Beginnings of the like Manner about our Descent; only because the Government, after they had embark'd the Army, did not provide a fair Wind for them also; but perhaps I may find time to be more particular on that Head in Conjunction with some others of like Nature: In the mean time I recommend it to our Generals to consider of, and how it behoves them to conquer; for if they fail, however they may have Mercy from the Enemy, they are sure to have no Quarter at home.

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